

## STATUS OF THE 2002 BLUE RIBBON PANEL RECOMMENDATIONS: 3/21/05

### A. GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS

**1. Designate a senior level position within the Executive Branch of the County government to coordinate and implement ongoing pedestrian and traffic safety activities.**

*Status: Pedestrian safety effort is currently led by the Planning Manager in the Planning Implementation Section of the Offices of the County Executive.*

**2. Establish a formal County Executive-appointed advisory board confirmed by the County Council, to oversee the implementation of the Panel's final report and to provide advice to elected officials and department directors regarding priorities and needs in the area of pedestrian and bicycle safety and access.**

*Status: The Pedestrian Safety Advisory Committee was established in 2002.*

### B. EDUCATION RECOMMENDATIONS

**1. Montgomery County must take the lead in undertaking a comprehensive, ongoing public awareness/social-marketing campaign.** The campaigns should include ongoing law enforcement activities; and involves public and private sector stakeholders, including: health and safety advocacy organizations, local media, schools, civic associations, state and municipal governments, the business, disability and senior communities, and for those for whom English is a second language

*Status: Each year, Montgomery County participates in the regional campaign organized by the COG. In 2004, the County had the outreach material printed in several Asian languages in addition to Spanish and English. In 2005, Montgomery County may be the hosting jurisdiction for the rollout of the annual program. In 2004, Montgomery County had tip cards printed with the state pedestrian law for drivers. These are handed out at pedestrian safety talks and other public events.*

**2. Pedestrian safety curriculum should be included as a mandatory unit in school health programs/classes in grades K through 8.** Currently, the material is available but left up to the teachers' discretion to include it in the classroom. Appropriate student measurement should determine the effectiveness of this addition to the safety curriculum.

*Status: In 2004, an additional 7 schools in the Silver Spring area received crosswalk training at the K-2 level.*

**3. Pedestrian safety segments should be included in all ESOL classes with appropriate student measurement.**

*Status: In 2004, each of the adult ESOL classes had a pedestrian safety week in which the instructors showed videos on pedestrian safety, conducted question and answer sessions, and handed out material provided by the County.*

**4. The State should expand pedestrian safety material in the MVA handbook and private driver training schools course curriculum.**

*Status: The State now includes pedestrian safety material in the MVA handbook. We are still working to get the information incorporated into the privately run driver ed training manual.*

**5. The MVA driver's exam should include mandatory questions about pedestrian safety.**

*Status: The MVA driver's exam now includes a question about pedestrian safety.*

**6. A pedestrian safety segment should be included in driver improvement classes.**

*Status:*

### **C. ENFORCEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS**

**1. Law enforcement agencies must step-up and maintain an ongoing and visible pedestrian and traffic safety enforcement effort to combat dangerous driver and pedestrian behavior, such as aggressive driving, drunk driving, red light running, excessive speeding and jaywalking.**

*Status: During the "2004 Smooth Operator Campaign" the Police Department issued over 14,900 violations during a four week effort. Violations targeted were directly linked to aggressive driving. The Holiday Taskforce was extremely successful with 212 intoxicated drivers arrested, and a grand total of 3,705 were arrested for the year.*

**2. Dramatically reduce excessive speeding through increased enforcement.** The results of these efforts should be used as one of the major performance measures of law enforcement agencies in Montgomery County and the Department of Public Works and Transportation. The desired outcome should be an increase in the percentage of roads whose top operating speed (85th percentile) is at or below the posted speed limit.

*Status: Speeding is still in epidemic proportions in Montgomery County. A lack of resources and technology (officers, stealth pads, speed cameras, etc.) prevents the Police Department from effectively changing behavior. In 2004, some selective enforcement campaigns appears to have reduced the speed on certain roadways but it is too early to tell if the effect will be long or short term in duration. Overall, it appears that the department issued over 47,000 traffic citations for speeding violations last year.*

**3. Increase enforcement of pedestrian right-of-way in crosswalks** with emphasis in hot spots and CBDs. Officers should have 'pedestrian safety law card' for reference. Effectiveness of enforcement should be based on amount of reduction in number of pedestrians hit in a crosswalk (or crossing legally). Enforcement should also focus on pedestrian compliance.

*Status: Montgomery County Police conducted 6 pedestrian enforcement stings, issuing more than 200 citations and distributing pedestrian safety education material.*

**4. Increase resources and revenues to support Montgomery County's traffic safety enforcement.**

*Status: The Special Operations Division command staff meets monthly with the six traffic sergeants and DPWT in order to discuss enforcement strategy and countywide details.*

*Additional resources have not been allocated at this time, but better cooperation has been established between the districts and agencies.*

**5. Pedestrian traffic safety law violations must be aggressively adjudicated by the court system.** In cooperation with representatives of the County's judicial, legal, law enforcement and executive branches of the government, the Criminal Justice Coordinating Commission should present to the County Executive and Advisory Board an annual report on pedestrian traffic safety violations and their outcomes.

*Status: The chair of the Criminal Justice Coordinating Commission provided the Pedestrian Safety Advisory Committee with their first annual report (FY 2004).*

**6. Improve the collection and publication of data concerning traffic safety law enforcement.** The County should publish a list of ticketed violations for each traffic offense in the County. The total fines paid for these offenses should be computed and compared with the funds the County receives from the State for traffic enforcement efforts.

*Status: The Department does not have the resources to track citations issued in a database so it relies on the State to send their data monthly. The Department does not have access to total fines for comparison purposes. According to the Management and Budget Division, the funds from the state are as follows: FY04 \$12,678,702, FY05 \$14,000,000 (projection), FY06 \$13,000,000(projection).*

**7. Law enforcement agencies in Montgomery County should analyze the location of pedestrian deaths and injuries in cooperation with DPWT.** This information should be compared to the number of tickets issued for traffic safety law violations in that same area to determine if lax compliance is a contributing factor, and/or targeted enforcement is needed at certain hot spots, or if there is an underlying facility design deficiency.

*Status: The Police Department uses the Hot Spot list in making recommendations for targeted enforcement activities for pedestrian safety. In some cases, specific engineering changes have been made to improve pedestrian safety.*

**8. Expand the human and technological resources available to the County Police Department to enforce traffic safety laws.** School crossing guards, bus drivers, County Transportation and Ride-On staff should be encouraged to report traffic violations of offending drivers by phone call or letter. Law enforcement technology should be routinely used throughout the County to step up traffic enforcement efforts, including red light cameras and speed monitoring devices.

*Status: Montgomery County has some speed monitoring devices in place; however, additional funding is needed to increase the monitoring so it is more consistent throughout the County. See also Legislation Recommendations. The Department has six Variable Message Sign boards on order and is attempting to get funding for "Stealth Pads".*

**9. Involve the public in traffic safety enforcement efforts.** Post a central phone number on County vehicles (police, Ride-On, DPWT, Park and Planning, school buses, etc.) for people to report the license plate numbers of unsafe driver. Have zero tolerance for County employees who do not obey traffic laws.

*Status: The police communications non-emergency line (301-279-8000) can be used for in-progress aggressive driving violations so that officers on patrol (on or off duty) could attempt to intervene and stop the violator. At this time the Department does not have the resources to support follow-up investigation for unsafe driving.*

**10. Continue an aggressive recruitment campaign to fill all County Police vacancies.**

*Status: The Police Chief has made filling sworn police officer positions a high priority. Over the last 3 years, the department has been successful in meeting or exceeding its numeric goals and the current numbers indicate the department has 14 sworn positions over its allotted complement.*

**E. ENGINEERING RECOMMENDATIONS**

**1. Montgomery County and the State of Maryland should embrace and proactively implement a Pedestrian Safety Engineering Tool Box that contains many of the most effective and innovative engineering options available to make our County a safe and walkable community.** These tools include countdown pedestrian signals, in-pavement crosswalk lights, traffic calming techniques, etc.

*Status: Montgomery County has begun incorporating these techniques and countdown signals are now being used in all new pedestrian signal installations. Other improvements made in 2004: remarking 325 crosswalks, installation of 60 pedestrian crossing signs; installed and/or improvement 3 pedestrian refugee islands; and installed audible pedestrian signals at more than three intersections in the Wheaton and Silver Spring CBD.*

**2. The Pedestrian Safety Engineering Tool Box solutions should address three primary needs of pedestrians:** adequate pedestrian access parallel to roadways, the ability of all pedestrians to safely cross roadways, and safe walking routes that connect communities to schools, transit, recreational facilities, commercial and retail areas, and other communities.

*Status: Tool Box solutions are being applied either in response to specific situations or as a result of an area-wide pedestrian study.*

**3. Montgomery County's roadway, intersection, sidewalk, and streetscape design standards should be brought into full conformity with the most innovative, pedestrian friendly national design guidelines. The State of Maryland should also embrace engineering options to maximize pedestrian safety and access.**

*Status: Council staff member Glenn Orlin is in the process of revising Chapter 49, Streets and Roads. His revision will likely include changes to the existing standards.*

**4. M-NCPPC should include a section addressing pedestrian access and safety in all Master Plans and Sector Plans.**

*Status: M-NCPPC has begun to include a section on pedestrian access as part of the transportation chapter of master plans. In addition, the master plans give recommendations for making the more densely developed areas, such as the town centers, more pedestrian friendly.*

**5. The County should require that all public and private construction projects include a “Pedestrian Impact Statement,” including a process for review by the County to maximize pedestrian safety and access.**

*Status: For public projects, the pedestrian impact statement has been incorporated into the facility planning process. For private projects, the MNCPPC has been working to increase the compliance among developers for pedestrian safety and access. Evaluation is needed to determine if the impact statement has been effective in*

**6. The County should continue enhancements of its collection and use of pedestrian and vehicular crash data.** Success will be indicated when crash locations are mapped on a regular basis, by type for each year and groups of years, backed up by supporting analysis and detail, and are used to identify, design and prioritize solutions ranging from transportation facility reconstruction to enforcement actions. In addition, it is recommended that citizen complaints about troublesome pedestrian and traffic safety conditions be tracked and analyzed for potential problems.

*Status: The Police Department is working to improve the collection and use of pedestrian and vehicular crash data involving fatalities. The DPWT uses the crash data when evaluating locations for pedestrian safety improvements.*

**7. Montgomery County should carry out a countywide “Safe Routes to Schools” program to maximize safety and access for students at all schools for limits set for bus service (i.e., two miles for high schools).**

*Status: Montgomery County Public Schools conducted a pilot project at Rolling Terrace Elementary School. The City of Rockville has a program for the 9 elementary schools within its city limits.*

**8. Reassess adequacy of all pedestrian signal timings.**

*Status: DPWT reevaluates signal timings in response to specific requests and when recommended by an area-wide study. Typically, congested areas (CBDs, Metro stations, etc.) and locations used by seniors and special needs residents have received the most attention.*

**9. Relocate inconveniently placed and mid-block bus stops closer to intersections to encourage transit-using pedestrians to use crosswalks..**

*Status: In 2004, DPWT finished the first phase of its countywide bus stop study. This phase included collecting information and GPS locations for all bus stops including Metrobus stops. The second phase, developing a needs assessment and improvement plan, began in December 2004. The final phase will be the development of an interactive database.*

**10. Provide safe ADA-compatible crossings at all bus stops.**

*Status: This is being done as part of the bus stop study.*

**11. Public and major private building entrances, especially for schools and other facilities serving the youth and aged, should similarly be located with reference to safe ADA compatible street crossings.** Design review should guard against siting major entrances where crossings are unsafe. Existing problem areas, evidenced by pedestrian crashes or unsafe

behavior, should be corrected with building retrofits, crosswalk additions or modifications, or erection of pedestrian barriers (least desirable unless temporary).

*Status: Montgomery County is working to improve the inconsistency between street crossings on State and County roads.*

**12. Install additional traffic signals in Central Business Districts (CBDs) and other high activity locations to give pedestrians more locations to cross streets safely by controlling traffic flow and speed.**

*Status: A comprehensive pedestrian improvement project was completed in Silver Spring CBD in 2004. SHA and DPWT have been making similar improvement in the Wheaton CBD.*

**13. Reduce the number of right-turns-on-red, or limit them to off-peak hours, at intersections within Central Business Districts, other high-density areas, and frequent crash "hot spot" locations. The effectiveness of this change will be measured by tracking collisions at these locations.**

*Status: This has been done in Silver Spring and Bethesda.*

**14. Undertake a review of the speed limits on County and State roads to ensure that speed limits are realistic and reflect operating conditions and adjacent development patterns.**

*Status:*

**15. Include public compliance with the posted speed limits as part of the performance measures of both the Police Department and the Department of Public Works and Transportation.**

*Status:*

**16. Road widening projects should anticipate potential speeding problems that often develop during non-peak hours, and include a plan to control speeds as part of their design.**

*Status:*

**17. Replace all pedestrian crossing signs with the new florescent yellow/green signs in all school zones by the end of calendar year 2002.**

*Status: Montgomery County, DPWT has specified florescent yellow green pedestrian crossing signs for school zone; In progress.*

**18. "Stop for Pedestrians" paddle signs should be placed at the roadway centerline at all unsignalized crosswalks in CBDs and other areas of high pedestrian activity to reinforce pedestrians' right-of-way. Signs should note the maximum fine for failure to yield to pedestrians (\$500), similar to what is done for littering, which has a maximum \$1000 fine.**

*Status: In 2004, pedestrian paddle signs were approved at 10 locations.*

**19. Fully fund the County's crosswalk re-striping program, shorten the current five-year re-striping cycle to every two years along major highways and arterials, and annually in school and transit zones. Agencies receiving permits for work in the roadway should be required to post a bond and replace pavement markings within three days of completing repaving**

operations. Failure to replace the pavement markings should result in loss of the bond and a freeze on any future permits until the work is done.

*Status:*

**20. The lighting policy for State roads should be revised to reflect the recommendations of the Illuminating Engineering Society of North America (IESNA), which is the policy being adopted by DPWT.**

*Status: Chip Rupp, of SHA, indicates they have been using these standards for several years.*

**21. Once DPWT's lighting policy revision has been finalized, an assessment of the existing lighting levels of all major highways and arterials should be done and remedial measures taken where needed, giving priority to transit routes and commercial and high-density residential areas.**

*Status:*

**22. Adopt American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) recommendations for barriers to protect pedestrians on bridges and along roadways. Where a guardrail is located behind the sidewalk, it should be relocated to the curb line.**

*Status: This recommendation will not be implemented since DPWT does not follow AASHTO guidelines.*

**23. Locate ADA-compliant handicap ramps to provide the safest and shortest crossing for pedestrians. Each corner of an intersection should have two ramps.**

*Status:*

**24. Designate the pedestrian safety coordinator as the staff person responsible for disseminating ADA information within DPWT.**

*Status:*

**25. Provide adequate funding to DPWT for necessary pedestrian traffic safety engineering changes to meet the current challenges.**

*Status:*

## **F. LEGISLATIVE RECOMMENDATIONS**

**1. Establish a "Homicide by Aggressive Driving" statute.**

*Status: Legislation currently pending in the state legislature.*

**2. Establish a "Felony hit-and-run" statute.** Currently, fleeing a scene of a fatal or serious injury crash is only a misdemeanor.

*Status:*

**3. Enact legislation to allow the use of photo enforcement cameras to ticket vehicles exceeding the posted speed limit.**

*Status: Legislation currently pending in the state legislature.*

**4. Support legislation (HB 130) that would increase the State's share of building sidewalks and bicycle pathways along State roads to 80%. Currently, the State has a 50/50 share with the counties and municipalities.**

***Status:***

**5. Double the fines against traffic law violators in school zones.**

***Status:*** *In 2004, the state doubled the fines for drivers who pass stopped school buses.*

**6. Remove the “must appear” in court provision in Maryland law [TR § 21-502, Pedestrians’ right-of-way in crosswalks, (2) and (c)]. This significantly reduces the amount of time police officers must spend in court, and will encourage more active enforcement of this failure-to-yield-to-pedestrian law.**

***Status:*** *In 2004, the state eliminated the must appear provision.*

**7. Increase penalties against repeat offenders of traffic safety laws.**

***Status:***

**8. Increase penalties against repeat offender drunk drivers, drunk drivers who test more than twice the .08 BAC legal limit, and suspected drunk drivers who refuse to take the BAC test.**

***Status:***

**9. Institute new penalty targeted at drivers blocking crosswalks and intersections (Don’t Block the Box).**

***Status:***

**10. State and County should enact budgets that increase funding for traffic safety enforcement, education and engineering.**

***Status:***

**11. The County should conduct a thorough review of Maryland State pedestrian traffic safety law violations to determine if the severity of the penalty/punishment is commensurate with the offense to ensure it serves as an effective deterrent.**

***Status:***